
Montana

Office of Public Instruction

Assessment Handbook

Volume 1
February 1999

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A Collaborative Project Compiled by:

- The Division of Special Education •
- The Division of Educational Opportunity and Equity •
(Title I, Part A Program)
- The Division of Measurement and Accountability •



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Sources for material in this Handbook: CTB/McGraw Hill Examiner's Manual, 1989.

Title I, Part A Policy Guide, U.S. Department of Education.

Introduction



Actions by the Montana Legislature, the state Board of Public Education, and the U.S. Congress require major changes in student testing and assessment reporting requirements for Montana's statewide assessment, Title I programs, and Special Education programs. Other federal programs also will be affected by changes that include assessment data for program evaluations. The federal program changes rely on data from state assessment programs for much of the required assessment data, rather than creating separate program-specific assessment processes.

Because of the changes, the statewide and federal program assessment requirements are in transition. The changes in the assessment program will be phased in until school year 2000-01 when the requirements must be in place. A great deal of coordination is underway within the Office of Public Instruction (OPI) to assure that Montana schools will not be burdened with three different testing programs to meet the changed requirements.

The OPI recognizes that the cooperation of the schools is vital to this transition. To that end, we are providing calendars and materials in this booklet to assist with the testing and reporting requirements that will see annual changes for the next few years.

Montana Statewide Assessment Requirements for Testing and Reporting

The Board of Public Education (BPE) is currently reviewing their statewide assessment requirements, ARM 10.56.101, to reflect the changes that have taken place and address concerns that have arisen:

- revised content and performance standards have been adopted in reading and mathematics
- content area standards are currently under review in science, communication arts, health enhancement, technology and world languages
- the other content area standards will be reviewed within the next two years
- the current tests are not aligned to the revised standards
- districts are using a variety of tests that do not provide reliable and comparable results
- poor testing practices are occurring
 - large groups tested in cafeterias
 - large portions of the student body not tested
 - no make-up testing for those absent on test days
 - students with disabilities often not tested
 - outdated tests and norms are being used
- statutes require that the test results be reported to the public and should, therefore, be com-

parable and reliable information

- students with special needs are often excluded from participation in the statewide assessment

The BPE has adopted criteria for reviewing and selecting a statewide test and has requested that the board-approved tests be matched to the revised standards to determine the degree to which each test appears to measure progress toward the standards.

Until that work is completed, however, the BPE's current administrative rule 10.56.101 requires all accredited schools to:

- test all students in grades 4, 8, and 11
- test in reading, math, communication arts, science, and social studies
- conduct the testing in the spring
- use a test from the board-approved list which includes versions of
 - CTBS (Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills)/Terra Nova—CTB/McGraw Hill
 - ITBS (Iowa Test of Basic Skills)/TAP (Tests of Achievement and Proficiency)—Riverside Publishing
 - SAT (Stanford Achievement Test)/TASK (Tests of Academic Skills)—Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement
- test all students, unless an IEP or LEP team has specifically determined that a student cannot participate, even with accommodations (see Special Education requirements on page 3; LEP procedures should be similar)
- provide accommodations for testing that will not invalidate the testing results and are in accordance with a student's IEP or LEP team decision (example: signing the instructions, use of large-print edition)
- provide alternate tests for students who are excluded from taking the regular test; it is expected that a small percentage, less than 2 percent of all students, will participate in alternate assessments
- report the test results to OPI

Title I Assessment Requirements for Testing and Reporting

In order to show the impact of the Title I program on student learning, the assessment requirements for Title I were revised in 1994 to utilize a state assessment that is aligned with the state's content and performance standards.

By the year 2000-01, Title I assessment reporting will require disaggregated results for the following categories:

- gender
- major racial/ethnic group
- economic disadvantage

- migrant status
- Limited English Proficiency (LEP) status
- students with disabilities

Other assessment requirements under Title I that must be in place by 2000-01 are as follows:

- reporting by level of proficiency (novice, nearing proficiency, proficient, advanced)
- use of the statewide assessment results for accountability
- testing aligned to state content and performance standards using multiple measures
- testing in mathematics and reading at a minimum

Until all requirements are in place in the spring of 2001, districts are encouraged to request their scoring services to provide disaggregated data for as many of the listed categories as possible to begin the process of analyzing and understanding the impact of their data. That will require proper coding at the time of testing, and ordering the appropriate scoring plan or package.

Special Note: All students are tested and all test results are reported to OPI as described in the handbook. However, after OPI Title I staff initially identifies schools for improvement based on the data for all students, the district must conduct an additional step known as the local annual review for Title I. In this local annual review additional options may be considered:

- in targeted assistance schools, districts may elect to use results for Title I students only (or may use results for all students); must use results for all students in schoolwide programs, and
- the scores of students who had not been enrolled in one particular school of the district for the entire school year may be excluded in determinations of improvement status for that school;
- however, if the student has been enrolled in the district (various schools) for the entire school year, the scores must be included in determinations of improvement status for the district as a whole.

Remember: Scores for all students must be submitted to OPI as part of the Annual Fall Report, regardless of the length of time in a school or district.

The results of the local annual review, which may also include results from other assessments given locally, are submitted to OPI Title I staff according to directions given to identified schools by OPI Title I staff.

Special Education Assessment Requirements for Testing and Reporting

Significant changes have taken place in the assessment requirements for students with disabilities. A combination of actions by the BPE and Congress require, effective for the 1998-99 school year, that students with disabilities:

- be included in the statewide assessment
- be allowed accommodations, if necessary and appropriate, to offset the effects of the disability
- be given alternate assessment if, even with accommodations, the regular assessment is not appropriate
- have an IEP team determine and document the student's participation in state or districtwide testing
 - if participating, identify accommodations, if any, that will be used
 - if not participating, provide the reason and identify the alternative assessment that will be given.

In addition, districts must (**also effective for the 1998-99 school year**):

- provide separate reporting of scores for students with disabilities (e.g., disaggregated scores) participating in the regular assessment, with or without accommodations, and
- report the number of students participating in alternate assessments.

Beginning with school year 2000-01:

- (a) the state or districts must develop guidelines for participation of children with disabilities in alternate assessments (IDEA '97), and
- (b) the state and district must report the performance of children with disabilities on alternate assessment, if statistically sound and results are not identifiable with individual children.

Out-of-Level Testing

A technique often used for both Title I students and students with disabilities or limited English proficiency is out-of-level testing. Usually, publishers recommend no more than one level difference from the level of the test a student would normally take. The publishers provide guidance on how to administer out-of-level tests and on how to include those scores with those of others in the student's grade level by using scaled scores or expanded scores. Please refer to your own publisher's manuals for these directions.

Reporting Requirements Calendar

1998-99—Future

	<u>MT State Assessment BPE 10.56.101, ARM</u>	<u>Title I P.L. 103-382 Sec. 1111(b)(3)</u>	<u>Special Ed* P.L. 105-17 Sec. 612(a)(17)</u>
<u>Type of Test</u>			
Regular Assessment with Accommodations, if appropriate	1998-99	1998-99	1998-99
Alternate Assessment	1998-99		2000-01
<u>Subjects to be Tested</u>			
Reading	1998-99	1998-99	1998-99
Math	1998-99	1998-99	1998-99
Social Studies	1998-99		1998-99
Science	1998-99		1998-99
Language Arts	1998-99		1998-99
<u>Level</u>			
School, Gr. 4, 8, 11	1998-99	1998-99	1998-99
<u>Subcategories for Reporting Test Results**</u>			
Gender	Not yet determined	2000-01	
Race/Ethnicity	Not yet determined	2000-01	
English Proficiency Status	Not yet determined	2000-01	
Migrant Status	Not yet determined	2000-01	
Economically Disadvantaged	Not yet determined	2000-01	2000-01
Students with IEPs – in Regular Assessment	1998-99	2000-01	1998-99
Students with IEPs – with Alternate Assessment	1998-99 (# only)		2000-01
<u>Other Categories</u>			
# Not Tested	1998-99		
Reasons for not Testing	1998-99		

*Must report for students with disabilities in the same detail as required for statewide assessment reporting.

**NOTE: See page 13 for details on how to begin obtaining disaggregated score reports.

Preparations for Administering the Tests

The tests approved for use in Montana by the Board of Public Education (BPE) were all standardized under carefully controlled conditions. To obtain the most valid test results, it is important to simulate the standardization conditions as closely as possible when administering the tests. For guidance on using acceptable accommodations, please refer to pages 15 through 20 of this handbook and the publisher's examiner's manual.

Preparing for Testing

Before administering the tests, become familiar with the testing schedule, the test content, and the directions for administration. Study the information and share it with proctors (other individuals who will be helping with the testing).

These guidelines and procedures are suggested to help you plan and conduct the testing sessions.

- Become familiar with the test content by taking the test and rehearsing its administration.
- Find out if any students require accommodations. If so, learn what the accommodations are and how they will be administered.
- Read the directions for completing the student-identifying information, marking the answers, and administering the tests.
- Have all materials assembled for quick distribution.
- Allow time for questions before beginning the testing session.
- Make sure that the students understand what they are to do before beginning.
- Follow the specific directions for administering the test. Be precise.
- Monitor the students to be sure they are marking answers properly. They should mark only one response for an item and should erase completely any discarded or incorrect response.
- Observe time limits for those tests that are timed. If all students have completed a timed section before the specified working time has elapsed, call time and proceed to the next section if there is sufficient time remaining in the testing session (unless your district or school procedures direct otherwise due to an established schedule).
- Do not allow students to work longer than the specified working time.

Preparing Students for Testing

It is important that students anticipate the tests with interest rather than with anxiety. Help them to understand the purpose of taking an achievement test—to find out which skills they have mastered and which skills they need to develop. Help them approach the testing in a relaxed, positive way by conveying the following ideas.

- Point out that some items may be more difficult than others, and some material may be new to the students; they are not expected to know all the answers.
- Reassure students that they will be given ample time to do their best.
- Emphasize that the test requires no special preparation and that it will not affect their grades, but it is important to do their best since results will be used to demonstrate how well students in their school are doing overall.

Planning for Proctors

It is recommended that students take the tests in a normal or regular classroom setting with a teacher from whom they normally receive classroom instruction. The number of assistants needed for a testing session depends on the maturity of the students and their test-taking experience. As a general rule, we recommend one proctor for every 6 to 10 students for the primary grades. For grade 4 and above, we recommend one proctor for every 15 students. An excellent way for proctors to become familiar with the testing procedures is to take the test before the testing session.

At the beginning of the testing session, introduce the proctors and assign the students they will be assisting. Proctors may assist in completing student-identifying information.

During testing, the proctors should check to see that the students are marking answers in the correct way, and they should help those who are not marking correctly. If a student is having difficulty marking answers, finding the place in the test book, or turning the page, the proctor should notify the examiner. After such problems have been resolved, assistance should be given only in the mechanics of taking the test.

At the end of testing, the proctors should assist in collecting test materials.

Schedule the Tests

Plan testing carefully, in a way that will help all students do their best. Here are some points to remember.

- Scheduling should be coordinated for the school or district as a whole, rather than random scheduling that might vary from teacher to teacher.
- Administer the test, if possible, during the middle of the **week**.
- Avoid testing on days just before or after vacations, important school functions, or holidays.
- Avoid testing just after the students have had strenuous physical activity or lunch. Morning only testing schedules are preferable to all day testing.

- Schedule the testing so that there will be sufficient time to complete a unit by the end of the testing session.
- Schedule breaks so that an unhurried pace and a relaxed atmosphere are maintained. Be sensitive to the fatigue level and attention span of the students. Balance a sense of their attention span against knowledge of the length and difficulty of the various test sessions, and alter the schedule as necessary.
- Eliminate distractions, such as bells or telephones.
- Use a DO NOT DISTURB sign on the door of the testing room.

Timing the Tests

Accurate timing of the tests is important to ensure reliability of the results. While the tests are not primarily speed tests, the time limits on some parts may mean that some students will not complete all of the items. The time limits give students ample opportunity to demonstrate the effective range of their abilities, and most students will finish within the times specified.

In some levels of the various tests, some of the items and passages are read aloud by the examiner. For these items, approximate times are given. The estimated times assume that the items will be administered at a steady, moderate pace so that the students' attention and concentration will be sustained.

The examiner's manual gives the time limits and a suggested testing schedule. The times shown are usually for actual working time. Begin timing when all students understand how to mark their answers, and make sure that all students start the test at the same time.

Students should begin working when given the signal to begin. They should continue to work according to the instructions within the test. They should stop working when they reach a stop sign or the word STOP, or when time is called. Students may go back over any items within a timed test unit before time is called, but they may not go on to the next test or back to any previous one. If all students have completed a timed section before the specified working time has elapsed, call time and proceed with the next section if there is sufficient time remaining in the testing session. Do not do this if your school or district as a whole is to follow the administering of only certain test sections on certain days so as to not get ahead of the planned schedule.

General Guidelines for Testing

Testing Cautions

Coaching. Make sure that all students understand the directions for taking the test. Assist students with mechanical acts such as finding the correct place. Do not provide assistance that will inadvertently indicate an answer. Remember that this is a test, not a learning activity. Do not indicate the correct response to any item except sample items.

Guessing. Encourage students to attempt all items, even those dealing with content that is unfamiliar to the students. Encourage students to make their most careful choice for each item and then go on. Avoid using the term "guessing," as this may encourage random marking.

Random Marking. Discourage students from marking responses randomly. Random marking indicates that the student has no understanding of the item. If it is determined that a student has marked answers randomly, treat the test as a nonvalid test.

Nonvalid Tests. A nonvalid test results when a student loses time during a test section or marks answers randomly. A loss of time may result from illness or some other unavoidable interruption. To ensure that loss of time or random marking is treated in scoring as a nonvalid test and not as an incomplete test, erase all answer marks for the affected test section and fill in any special coding as you are directed to in the examiner's manual for your test. This will ensure that the test section will be automatically eliminated in the scoring process.

Irregularities During Testing. Any test administration may be marred by unforeseen irregularities that, in some cases, can result in individual or group performance that is not valid. Make a note of any irregularities involving individual students, such as marking multiple responses to test items, marking responses at random, experiencing sudden illness, having to leave the room, or becoming unduly disturbed by the testing situation. In addition, identify any student who has a language difficulty or a severe physical handicap that might have affected his or her performance on the test (see pages 15-20 on Accommodations). Also note any unusual interruptions or distractions that affected the entire group. If using your publisher's scoring service, include this information in the space and/or format as directed by your publisher's manual.

Absence During Testing

Every reasonable effort must be made to provide make-up testing for students who were absent for all or part of the test. Students who had part or all of a test invalidated due to uncontrollable events should also be included in the make-up testing.

Include these tests with all others to be scored.

Checklists for Planning

The Examiner's Checklist and the Proctor's Checklist, which follow, summarize some of the key points to remember in preparing to administer the tests. It may be helpful to make photocopies of the Proctor's Checklist to distribute to assistants.

Examiner's Checklist

- ___ Take the test to become familiar with its content
- ___ Review directions and procedures for:
 - administering any Practice Tests provided
 - completing student-identifying information
 - administering each subtest
 - marking answers
- ___ Make sure you have enough materials; assemble materials for quick distribution
- ___ Make sure students have their own test books or answer sheets for each testing session
- ___ Follow precisely any specific directions that are given with regard to particular subtests
- ___ Make sure students understand what to do before you begin each test
- ___ Make sure students mark answers properly:
 - mark only one response for each item
 - avoid random marking
 - erase completely any response to be changed
 - try to answer all items (you should avoid using the term "guessing")
- ___ Observe timing guidelines:
 - read oral items at a moderate, steady pace to maintain students' attention
 - call time and proceed to the next section if all students complete a timed section early (if your school and/or district schedule permit)
 - don't allow students to work longer than the specified working time
- ___ Follow procedures specified by your publisher for collecting materials and processing completed tests
- ___ Set up schedule for make-up tests

Proctor's Checklist

- ___ Help arrange the testing room
- ___ Help fill in student-identifying information on test books or answer sheets
- ___ Assist in distributing test material; make sure that students receive their own materials for each testing session
- ___ Locate students you will be monitoring
- ___ Make sure students are working in the correct place
- ___ Make sure students are marking only one answer for each item
- ___ Discourage talking or sharing of answers
- ___ Avoid showing or suggesting the correct answer (If a student asks, "Is this right?" give a neutral response, such as, "You choose the one you think is right and then go on.")
- ___ Inform the examiner if any unusual problems arise
- ___ Allow adequate time for assisting all students who need it
- ___ Help collect materials at the end of the session

Test Participation Information

Be sure to write down the following test participation information which will need to be reported with the scores on the Fall Report of Student Assessment which will be submitted to OPI the following October:

Number

- _____ Enrolled students at this grade level who were NOT tested with regular assessment.
- _____ Students NOT taking test because:
 - _____ IEP team determination if need for alternate test
 - _____ LEP team determination
 - _____ Absent
 - _____ Other _____
- _____ Test takers:
 - _____ with IEP
 - _____ with testing accommodations
 - _____ taking make-up tests
- _____ Students with IEP who took alternative assessment

Special Coding and Scoring for Disaggregation

The tests approved for use by the Montana Board of Public Education use answer sheets or answer booklets that include areas for "special codes" or "other information." These coding areas may be utilized to obtain "disaggregated" data for the various groups that are represented by the special codes that are entered.

For example, in order to begin collecting data for disaggregation based on the groups and subgroups listed on page 5 of this handbook, a district could select special codes to be used on the coding grid to represent the groups or subgroups for which disaggregation is desired. Each student's answer sheet or answer booklet would then be properly coded for any or all of the selected characteristics that apply to that student (e.g., gender, race/ethnicity, migrant status, LEP status, students with disabilities, and free and/or reduced lunch participant). Please see Appendix C for authority to utilize free and reduced lunch information.

Federal law and the Montana BPE require disaggregation of test scores for children with disabilities who are included in the regular assessment in school year 1998-99. The requirement to disaggregate scores for other groups listed above and on page 5 do not take effect until the 2000-01 school year. Since many schools and districts are involved in some kind of planning that demands data based decision-making, districts may wish to gather disaggregated data prior to the time the requirements will be in effect. Therefore, districts are encouraged to begin the use of special coding beyond that for students with disabilities this year (1998-99) or next year (1999-00) if at all possible.

Future Carl Perkins Vocational Education reporting will require disaggregated student achievement data as well. Therefore, districts are also encouraged to use a special code for 11th graders to indicate whether the student is a vocational education concentrator in addition to the characteristics listed above and on page 5. A **vocational education concentrator** is a student who, by the spring of 11th grade, is enrolled in at least his/her second vocational course in a program area (such as agriculture, business, family & consumer sciences, industrial technology) and **intends** to complete at least three vocational courses upon graduation. These courses may be of semester length or full year but must be a sequence of courses in a single occupational or program area.

Additional costs incurred above and beyond the regular scoring service costs may be funded by local Title I, special education, and Perkins budgets as appropriate.

It is a must to consult the publisher's scoring service for details and information regarding the use of special codes for disaggregation reports. The publishers' representatives and numbers, as well as 800 numbers for the companies, are listed in Appendix A of this handbook.

Reminder: Disaggregation of scores for disabled students included in the regular testing, with or without accommodations, is required this year, school year 1998-99 (spring testing of 1999).

For districts that hand score the tests: Student answer sheets or answer booklets may be coded as discussed above. The data may then be disaggregated through hand calculations for the identified subgroups.

Processing Completed Tests

When testing has been completed, prepare test books or answer sheets for scoring according to the publisher's directions. All unused materials should be sorted and stored according to the instructions of the test coordinator.

Hand-Scored Tests

If tests are to be scored by hand, check the materials carefully for completeness and accuracy. Be sure that all answers are marked correctly and that all identifying information on test book covers or answer sheet has been filled in accurately. When materials have been checked and are ready to score, follow the scoring procedures outlined in the appropriate norms book or table.

Machine-Scored Tests

If tests are to be scored by the publisher's scoring service, complete the following steps.

1. Check the student data grids on the front covers of the test books or answer sheets to be sure that they are completed accurately. If testing involves the use of a second test book or answer sheet, be sure that the identifying information for each student is identical on both pieces.
2. Check answer spaces to be sure that all marks are dark and solid. If an answer has been changed, make sure that it is completely erased and that the new answer is properly marked. An answer is not valid if more than one answer space is marked.
3. A test is not valid if a student has lost time during testing or if the student has marked answers randomly. Determine which tests, if any, are not valid. To ensure that the test will be treated in scoring as a nonvalid test and not as an incomplete test, follow these steps:
 - Erase all answer marks for the affected test section to ensure that the test will be eliminated from the scoring process.
 - Fill in whatever special spaces or codes you need to according to your publisher's directions to indicate a nonvalid test.
4. Separate machine-scorable test books or answer sheets from all other test materials.
5. Complete the Group Information Sheet or comparable sheet provided by the publisher. Use the Group Information Sheet as a checklist to ensure proper assembly of machine-scorable materials and for identification of the completed materials. Band together the stack of machine-scorable materials with the Group Information Sheet (or comparable sheet provided by the publisher) on top.
6. Return all scorable and nonscorable materials to the school or district test coordinator. Directions for returning test materials to the scoring service are given in special instructions to the coordinator. Materials to be scored should be returned to the publisher's scoring service as soon as the testing program is completed.

Including Students with Disabilities in Regular Assessment

The Montana Board of Public Education Student Assessment Rule 10.56.101 requires that students with disabilities must be included in the test administered to all students unless the conditions set out in the rules are present for students with Individualized Education Programs (IEPs). The term “students with disabilities” refers to students who are eligible for services under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). Although not included in this definition, students who are eligible under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Section 504) and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) may benefit from some of the same procedures outlined here. Under IDEA, a student is eligible for services if the student has an identified disability under IDEA and, because of that disability, needs special education and related services. Under Section 504 and Title II of the ADA, the student is covered if the student has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more major life activities such as learning.

Please refer to the Montana Board of Public Education Rule 10.56.101 in Appendix B of this handbook. The BPE’s rule does not include separate reporting for students covered by Section 504 or the ADA, but we have incorporated guidance similar to that for students with IEPs to assist districts in making appropriate accommodations for students who need them. The following are commonly asked questions concerning assessment of students with disabilities.

1. Students with disabilities are tested extensively. Why should they be included in the assessment system that other children are expected to take?

The current federal mandates, Improving America’s Schools Act (IASA) and the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), as well as the Montana Board of Public Education Administrative Rule, 10.56.101 Student Assessment, require inclusion of students with disabilities in statewide assessments. Statewide assessment used for Title I purposes must provide data on whether the yearly performance of each district and school served under Title I is enabling all children to meet the state’s student performance standards. It is important that students with disabilities be included in statewide assessments because they are expected to meet the same standards as other students.

Currently, the individualized testing of students with disabilities is designed to assist the Child Study Team (CST) in determining a student’s eligibility (or continuing eligibility) for special education services. The tests given are not the same as those for statewide assessment. Therefore, the data cannot be analyzed as part of the statewide assessment results.

2. What if assessments being used to measure the performance of all students do not measure what students with disabilities are currently learning in their programs?

While some students with disabilities may need modified instructional approaches, generally all students need to be working toward the same challenging standards.

3. Must students with disabilities be included in statewide assessments used for Title I accountability purposes?

Yes. Title I and federal civil rights laws require the inclusion in assessments of all children, including children with disabilities, in the grade being assessed. For a small number of students with disabilities, the severity of their physical or cognitive disabilities prevents them from participating meaningfully in exactly the same assessments as other students, even with the availability of appropriate accommodations. For this small population of students, appropriate alternate assessments should be used to assess their educational progress (see pages 21-22).

4. What assessment accommodations may be provided for students with disabilities?

Students with disabilities must be provided with appropriate accommodations when necessary to enable participation in the assessments. Assessment accommodations include changes in:

- the way assessment items are presented,
- the way a student may respond,
- the timing or scheduling of an assessment, and
- the setting

that are used to provide an equal footing for students with disabilities who need the accommodations. Assessment accommodations help students demonstrate what they know without being placed at a disadvantage by their disability.

5. Who decides which students with disabilities get assessment accommodations, and how is this decided?

The IEP team determines if a student with disabilities, eligible under IDEA, should be provided accommodations for assessment and what those accommodations should be. The decision(s) should be documented on the student's IEP.

The 504 team determines if a student with disabilities, eligible under Section 504, should be provided accommodations for assessment and what those accommodations should be.

There should be a close link between instruction and assessment. Therefore, it is generally held that the accommodations for assessment should be similar to those used for instruction and should be designed so that the assessment accurately measures the student's knowledge and skills related to the particular area being assessed.

6. How do I know which accommodations may affect the validity of assessments?

There are many questions about which accommodations preserve the reliability of test scores and the validity of inferences (whether the test measures the same content standards in the accommodated and non-accommodated versions) based on these scores. These questions have not yet been fully answered. Specific test protocols provided by commercial achievement test publishers may or may not provide adequate information on which accommodations produce comparable scores between accommodated and non-accommodated versions of the tests. Check the test administrator's or examiner's manual for your particular test or call the consultant for your test publisher listed in Appendix A of this handbook.

In some cases, decisions on allowable accommodations can be based on some logical assumptions about the purpose of the test. For example, a measure of silent reading comprehension could be invalidated by reading the test items to the student. On the other hand, providing a quiet setting for highly distractible students could hardly be seen as compromising the test's validity.

Example: List of Selected Assessment Accommodations

(These are just examples, not an exhaustive list.)

Timing/Scheduling	Setting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexible schedule • Extend the time allotted to complete the test • Administer the test in several sessions, specify duration • Time of day change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administer the test individually in a separate location • Administer the test to a small group in a separate location • Provide special lighting or acoustics • Provide adaptive or special furniture
Presentation	Response
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Braille edition or large-type edition • Prompts available on tape • Increase spacing between items or reduce items per page or line • Reading passages with one complete sentence per line • Multi-choice, answers follow questions down bubbles to right • Omit questions which cannot be revised, prorate credit • Teacher helps student understand prompt • Computer reads paper to student <p>Test Directions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sign directions to students • Read directions to students • Reread directions for each page • Simplify language in directions • Underline verbs in instructions • Clarify directions • Provide additional examples <p>Use of Assistive Devices/Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual magnification devices • Templates to reduce visible print • Auditory amplification device, hearing aid, or noise buffers • Audio taped administration of sections • Secure paper to work area (tape, magnet) • Markers to maintain place • Dark heavy or raised lines or pencil grips • Amanuensis (scribe) 	<p>Test Format</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase spacing (wider lines and/or wider margins) • Graph paper • Paper in alternative format (word processed, Braille, etc.) • Allow student to mark responses in booklet rather than answer sheet <p>Use of Assistive Devices/Supports</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Word processor • Student tapes response for later verbatim transcription • Typewriter • Communication device • Alternative response such as oral, sign, typed, pointing • Braille • Larger diameter, special grip pencil, copy assistance between drafts • Slant board or wedge • Tape recorder • Calculator • Abacus • Arithmetic tables • Spelling dictionary • Spell check

Including Students with Limited English Proficiency in Regular Assessment

The Montana Board of Public Education Student Assessment Rule 10.56.101 also requires that students with limited English proficiency (LEP) be included in the test administered to all students unless the conditions set out in the rules are present for LEP students. For limited English proficient students, appropriate assessment instruments and other measures should take into account content area and the language of instruction. Limited English proficient students should be assessed to determine their mastery of skills in subjects other than English. The decision about appropriate accommodations, if needed, should be made on an individualized basis by a team familiar with the student.

Please refer to the Montana Board of Public Education Rule 10.56.101 in Appendix B of this handbook before proceeding.

1. Must LEP students be required to meet the same content and performance standards as other students?

Yes. Initially, however, LEP students may take more time to meet the standards because they must also develop English language proficiency. As such, additional benchmarks toward meeting content standards might be developed to assess LEP student progress. In addition, districts might develop supplemental benchmarks in English language arts that address the acquisition of English language skills.

2. How do we support more effectively LEP students' achievements of content and performance standards?

This will require effective instruction, assessment of students to determine where they are relative to the state standards, good teacher professional development, appropriate materials development, family involvement, knowledge of the second language acquisition process, and knowledge of the culture and communications patterns that bear on the academic performance of LEP students. If appropriate native language support is available, it can be of assistance.

3. What factors should be considered when deciding how to assess LEP students?

Assessments for LEP students are to be rigorous, yet appropriate, for the needs of these students. Because of the diversity of this population (in terms of languages spoken and the level of English proficiency), no single method may address the needs of all LEP students. A variety of approaches is recommended. One is to assess content knowledge in the primary language. This

approach may be appropriate for students who receive instruction in the primary language or those who are more proficient in their primary language than in English. The primary language assessment should cover the same standards being assessed for all students.

4. If assessment in the primary language is impracticable or inappropriate, what other assessment practices can be used in order to meet the needs of LEP students?

Other modifications currently in use across the nation include:

- extra time,
- small group administration,
- flexible scheduling
- simplified directions, and
- allowing the use of dictionaries.

Other modifications might entail:

- providing audio-taped instructions in the primary language,
- allowing students to respond in either their primary language or English using audiotape,
- providing additional clarifying information at the end of the test booklet or throughout the test (e.g., synonyms for difficult words or phrases), and
- decreasing the English language demands of the assessment.

5. How does a district determine whether to test in English or use a modified assessment?

Decisions regarding when to test LEP students in English should be based on assessment of English language skills that measure four domains of language (speaking, listening, reading, writing), and on the number of years a student has received academic instruction. The Montana Board of Public Education's Rule 10.56.101 specifies that students with fewer than three years' instruction in English may be in need of accommodations or a waiver regarding standardized testing. If participation in the regular assessment is waived, an alternative assessment must be administered.

6. How does a district determine whether to test in English or in the primary language?

Districts should develop guidelines to help decision-makers choose the most appropriate assessment option. The most appropriate option should enable a child to demonstrate knowledge and skills in the content area.

Alternate Assessments

An alternate assessment is defined as an alternate method(s) for measuring the performance of students who are excluded from statewide and districtwide assessment programs. Generally, alternate assessments are not standardized. An alternative assessment requires the student to demonstrate knowledge in the assessed subject area(s). Alternate assessments are generally reserved for those students whose disabilities are so severe that they cannot participate meaningfully in the traditional assessment, even through the use of accommodations.

Consistent with requirements for assessments given during the 2000-01 school year, additional guidance will be provided to assist districts in meeting reporting requirements for alternate assessments.

Examples of alternate assessments

The basic forms that alternate assessments take are as follows:

- A. Skill demonstration of performance on content area standards. This direct method of measuring progress toward meeting standards utilizes sampling and teacher observation to judge a student's progress using the levels of proficiency in the Montana Performance Standards. Much like a behavior rating scale or an adaptive behavior survey, this method relies primarily on the teacher's judgment of the skill development (novice, nearing proficiency, proficient, or advanced) relative to the performance indicator.
- B. Standardized measures: utilizing the statewide or districtwide assessment, but modifying the assessment to such a degree that norm-referenced results are invalidated. Modifications would be made to the standardized measure to accommodate the student's particular disability(s) and to address his/her individualized education plan (IEP) goals.
- C. Individually designed assessments tailored to the student which measure the student's progress on skills identified in his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP).

Individually designed assessment(s) could include any of the following:

Portfolio

Performance-based tasks

Essay

Constructed-response

Classroom presentation

Demonstration

Curriculum-based evaluation

Because most alternate assessment methods are not standardized, scoring an alternate assessment can be very subjective. If the assessment does not focus on the knowledge or performance of the person tested, the assessment has no value. Therefore, it is important that the person(s) scoring any alternate assessment be well trained in the use and scoring of the assessment. The most commonly used method of scoring this type of assessment is a scoring rubric. Examples of scoring rubrics include:

- *Point system:* Student responses are scored based on a predetermined set of points for each requested response.
- *Checklists:* student performance of specific tasks are indicated and scored by checking each step completed correctly.
- *Rating Scales:* Analytic or holistic rating scales are used to rate either part or all of a required task or skill.

Appendix A

Publishers' Representatives for Montana

Riverside (ITBS, TAP, and other editions)

Frosyne Mensendick
Evaluation & Guidance Specialist
2415 24th Avenue West
Seattle, WA 98199

Phone: 206-283-8489

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1-800-323-9540

Website: www.riverpub.com

Harcourt Brace Educational Measurement (SAT, TASK, and other editions)

Ken Brown
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Colorado Springs, CO 80921

Phone: 719-481-6802

Fax: 719-481-6804

1-800-211-8378

Website: www.hbem.com

CTB/McGraw-Hill (CTBS, Terra Nova, and other editions)

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Appendix B

Montana Board of Public Education Rule, Student Assessment

10.56.101 STUDENT ASSESSMENT (1) By the authority of Section 20-2-121(12), MCA, the board of public education adopts rules for student assessment in the public schools and those private schools seeking accreditation.

(2) The board recognizes that the primary purpose of student assessment is to improve the quality of education and that there are a variety of assessment tools. At the local level, because norm-referenced tests are not designed to measure local programs, districts should begin to develop appropriate school and classroom assessment tools to measure the attainment of educational goals and objectives and the level of individual student achievement. Assessment results will be used in instructional planning and in evaluating the effectiveness of educational programs. At the state level, since it is useful to know how Montana students generally compare to students from other states, all accredited schools will annually administer norm-referenced tests selected from a list of such tests approved by the board and provided by the office of public instruction, except that schools that on the effective date of this rule are either:

- (a) not using norm-referenced tests from the board approved list;
- (b) not using norm-referenced tests to test in grade levels four, eight and eleven; or
- (c) using only parts of the approved norm-referenced tests; have until July 1991 to comply with this subsection. The tests will be administered to students in grades four, eight and eleven in reading, language arts, math, science and social studies. A spring test will be given and the test date will be within the empirical norm date time frame for the select test. If the spring test date falls outside the empirical norm date time frame, appropriate interpolated norms must be used. All scores will be sent to the office of public instruction with the annual fall report in a format specified by the office of public instruction and approved by the board of public education.

(3) Test scores are a part of each student's records which will be governed by the office of public instruction's guidelines for student records.

(4) The office of public instruction will collect and provide a statewide summary of the results to the board and legislature. No comparison of one Montana school or district to another will be made by the board of public education or the office of public instruction but schools are encouraged to compare their scores with the state norms and share testing information and results with parents and local community.

(5) The superintendent of public instruction is authorized to make available the reported student assessment data in compliance with confidentiality requirements of federal and state law.

(6) All norm-referenced test results released to the public schools will be accompanied by a clear statement of the purposes of the test, subject areas that have been tested, how they were tested, percent of students who did not participate in the norm-referenced test, limitations of norm-referenced tests, what is meant by the results and how the results will be used.

(7) Students with disabilities or limited English proficiency (LEP) shall participate in the regular assessment, unless it is determined that the student's attainment of educational goals cannot be adequately measured with the regular district assessment.

(a) For students with disabilities, the Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams have the authority to specify accommodations to be provided, as defined in (8), for participation by the student in the regular district assessment.

(i) When an IEP team determines that an accommodation for a student's disability would still not allow for adequate measurement of the student's attainment of educational goals, the IEP team may waive participation in the district norm-referenced test by providing an alternative form of testing that is appropriate to determine the student's attainment of educational goals and objectives.

(b) For students with limited English proficiency who have been identified by a team of educators as limited English proficient (LEP), those teams have the authority to specify accommodations to be provided, as defined in (8), for participation by the student in the regular district assessment.

(i) When the team of educators determines that an accommodation for an LEP student who has had fewer than three years of instruction in English would still not allow for adequate measurement of the student's attainment of educational goals, the team of educators may waive participation in the district test by providing an alternative form of testing that is appropriate to determine the student's attainment of educational goals and objectives.

(8) Accommodation allows the student to demonstrate competence in subject matter so that test results accurately reflect the student's achievement level rather than reflecting the student's limited English language development or impaired sensory or manual skills, except where those skills are the factors which the test purports to measure.

(a) Accommodation for testing purposes is defined as modifications similar to those used to support and accommodate the student in the instructional setting.

(b) Accommodations may include, but are not limited to extended time, small group administration, facilitator reading directions, native language support, student responding orally or using required assistive technology.

Appendix C

Authorization to Use Free and Reduced Lunch Information



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20202- 6132

March 18, 1996

MEMORANDUM TO CHIEF STATE SCHOOL OFFICERS

SUBJECT: Use of Free and Reduced Price Lunch Data for Title I Purposes

As many of you are aware, we have been working with officials at the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) regarding the use of free and reduced price lunch data for Title I purposes.

Section 108 of Public Law 103-448, the Healthy Meals for Healthy Americans Act of 1994, authorizes the release of student free and reduced school meal eligibility status for Federal and State education programs. Because of the sensitivity of this information and the intent to publish regulations implementing this section, USDA issued a memorandum several months ago stating that the use of such information for Federal and State education programs would not be permissible until such regulations were published. However, since that memorandum was issued, our Department has worked closely with USDA to explain the need for such information for the Title I program. As a result of our discussions, USDA issued the enclosed memorandum that authorizes the release of free and reduced school eligibility information for Title I purposes.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any further questions on this matter.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Mary Jean LeTendre", is positioned above the typed name.

Mary Jean LeTendre
Director

Compensatory Education Programs

Enclosure

cc: State Title I Coordinators

FEB 23 1996

SUBJECT: Cooperation with Education Officials - Title I

TO: Regional Directors
Special Nutrition Programs
All Regions

Section 108 of Public Law 103-448 authorizes the release of student free and reduced price school meal eligibility status for Federal and State education programs. Although we intend to promulgate regulations on the provision, we have not been able to publish the provision on a timely basis. Consequently, we are authorizing school officials, through this memorandum to cooperate with education officials collecting data for Title I purposes.

Under current policy, school food service officials may release aggregate information about the number of children eligible for free and reduced price meals. Additionally, we are now authorizing school food service officials to disclose the names of individual children who are eligible for free or reduced price meals, to officials collecting data for Title I allocation and evaluation purposes. While we are authorizing the release of this information, the final decision rests with local officials.

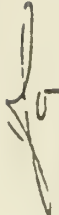
For allocation of funds under Title I, public schools are usually annually ranked according to the number of children eligible for free and reduced price school meals as an annual indicator of the socioeconomic status of the school's attendance area. While Title I funds are not dispersed to private schools, children from the attendance area who attend private schools may still be included in the total count of needy children living in the attendance area. Therefore, private schools that participate in the school nutrition programs may release the addresses, grade levels and eligibility status of children determined eligible for free and reduced price school meals to Title I officials. It should be noted that private schools would not need to release the names of free and reduced price eligible students, since addresses are sufficient to determine attendance areas.

While in some instances aggregate release of free and reduced price school meal information is sufficient, food service

officials may be asked to provide the names and eligibility status of individual children for Title I evaluation purposes. Consequently, school food service officials may cooperate with education officials for evaluation of Title I services. The Department of Education has been advised of this policy in the attached letter to Mary Jean LeTendre, Director of Compensatory Education Programs for that Department.

Please provide your States with copies of this memorandum and attached letter. You may contact Charles Heise or Barbara Semper at (703) 305-2968 with any questions.

SIGNED

 ALBERTA C. FROST
Director
Child Nutrition Division

Attachment